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PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
BOARD OF OVERSEERS  
OF  
HARVARD COLLEGE  
IN RELATION TO  
THE COLLEGE LIBRARY,  
1866-1867.



BOSTON:  
PRESS OF GEO. C. RAND & AVERY, No. 3 CORNHILL.  
1867.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Oct 26 1961



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IN BOARD OF OVERSEERS OF HARVARD COLLEGE,  
CAMBRIDGE, Oct. 23, 1866.

Hon. RICHARD H. DANA, Jun., submitted the Report of the Committee appointed to Visit the Library; whereupon, on motion of WILLIAM GRAY, Esq., it was —

VOTED, That the Report now submitted by the Committee to Visit the Library, together with the Reports of former years on the same subject now on file, be committed to a special committee of this Board, to report at an adjourned meeting.

Whereupon the Honorable President of the Board appointed, as the committee, WILLIAM GRAY, Esq., NATHANIEL THAYER, Esq., SAMUEL ELIOT, Esq., Rev. EDWARD E. HALE, and BENJAMIN S. ROTCH, Esq.

Attest :

NATHANIEL B. SHURTLEFF,

*Secretary.*

## PROCEEDINGS.

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AT an adjourned meeting of the BOARD OF OVERSEERS OF HARVARD COLLEGE, held at the Medical College in Boston on the 17th of January, 1867, WILLIAM GRAY, Esq., from the Special Committee on the report of the Committee appointed to Visit the Library, submitted the following Report; which was accepted, and communicated to the PRESIDENT AND FELLOWS, with a request that the same be printed.

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## REPORT.

THE special committee of the Overseers of Harvard College, appointed for the purpose, have examined the reports on the library for ten years, and have sought information and opinions on the subject from the president, professors, and librarian, and ask leave to present the conclusions at which they have arrived.

Your committee advise that the control and management of the library, and the expenditure of its income, subject to the approval of the government of the college, be intrusted to a permanent body, whose pursuits, tastes, and knowledge make them competent for these purposes. Such a body would make itself acquainted with the wants of the library, with the views of the teachers in the different departments, and direct the expenditure with a full knowledge of the subject. An approximation

to this course was temporarily adopted in a special case, and with good results. We deem it highly important, however, that the books to be purchased be designated by the permanent body, after full inquiry from every department, and not made by the several departments. The same body should be authorized to dispose, by exchange or sale, of all books which in their judgment are of little or no value to the library. We entertain the conviction that the interests of the library and of learning will be promoted by adopting a judicious system of exchanges or sales of books not deemed worthy of the care or room which they sometimes crave and occupy. Books, superseded by more recent and more thorough works, may be positively mischievous to persons not sufficiently versed in the subject to know their relative value. Officers of the college speak of the rubbish and chaff which ought to be removed from the collections in their departments.

With an administration so organized, the first great need of the library, and of the university, is a suitable building for its collections, with a reading room of ample accommodations and conveniences for their use. With a body of professors and students, immediately connected with the college, already exceeding one thousand in number; and in the vicinity of three hundred thousand persons, seeking and maintaining on a liberal scale institutions to educate and improve themselves and their children; in an university claiming the first rank in the land,—the library of Harvard College does not perform the office which its friends and the country have a right to expect from it. American colleges are not cloisters for the education of a few persons, but seats of learning, whose hospitable doors should be always open to every seeker of knowledge. A commodious and agreeable room, for reading and consulting books, is essential to every library; and it would be difficult to over-estimate its im-

portance in attracting young persons to devote a liberal portion of their time to the study of its treasures. The opportunities and incitements which it offers for agreeable recreation, for the cultivation of healthful tastes, as well as for instruction, are important safeguards against some of the dangers incident to college life.

The usefulness of books largely depends upon facility of access and the conveniences attending them. A building which is merely a place for their deposit and safe keeping has no claim to be called a library ; and, unless it be amply provided and furnished with every convenience for their use, the most valuable works are sleeping, and are not living teachers of men. The arrangements in Gore Hall entirely fail in this respect ; and we believe that no changes can be made in it, at any reasonable cost, which will remedy its defects. Many other grave objections to this hall are stated in the reports referred to us : the dampness of its location, its defective construction, its mode of heating, its want of accommodation for the librarian and his assistants, and its overcrowded alcoves, have been frequently represented to this Board. Perhaps some of these objections might be removed ; but, after full consideration, we are unanimously of the opinion that it would not be wise to attempt to adapt this building to the uses of a college library.

Your committee are not insensible to the weight of the opinion, which may be regarded as universal among scholars, that the purchase of books is a more important object of expenditure than the erection of buildings to contain them ; but, after an anxious consideration of the whole subject, in its relations to the present and prospective welfare of the university, and in regard to the reciprocal obligations of the college and the country to each other, we feel bound to state, that, under existing circumstances, the erection of a new building for the library is the first step to be taken.

Nearly ten years ago, a collection of engravings was given to the college on condition, that, "within a reasonable time, they should prepare and fit up suitable rooms, in which the collection should be securely kept, and properly arranged for inspection and exhibition; and that there should be stated days in each week throughout the year, on which visitors should be admitted, under such regulations as the Corporation might prescribe, of which public notice should be given in some suitable manner." In accepting the gift, the Corporation declared that, "until the college can obtain the means of enlarging Gore Hall, or of erecting or providing a separate building, an alcove of the library, properly fitted up for the purpose, shall be considered as affording suitable accommodations for the collection; and that, until more ample and complete accommodations are provided, they should judge how far and under what regulations visitors or others can be admitted to the collection." The engravings are still in one of the alcoves of the library, and no opportunity has been given for general or public inspection. It seems to your committee, in view of the value of this collection, as well as in view of attracting to Cambridge other collections, forming a part of that circle which embraces all knowledge, that an attempt should be made to execute more fully the terms of the gift; and we recommend, that, in erecting a new building for the library, provision be made for this object.

If we enjoyed the ample revenues of some of the libraries of Europe, we might adopt their plan of large and comprehensive collections upon all subjects: but, as the university is situated, common consent will declare that the library should be amply furnished with all valuable books, touching every branch taught within its walls; and, to this end, purchases should constantly be made of all new works in the different departments of instruction. As the resources of the college increase, and as benefac-

tors arise, interested in making additions upon special subjects, the range will be enlarged.

To fulfil, in any reasonable manner, the requirements of the library, with the limitation stated, there should be an average annual expenditure of ten thousand dollars for the purchase of books. The Boston Public Library expends annually for this object sixteen thousand dollars; the Boston Athenæum eight thousand dollars; while the funds of the college, especially devoted to the same object, give an annual income of only two thousand dollars. It is not necessary to include in our purchases all the books required in a general library; but the large cost of scientific works, and of books upon special branches of knowledge, not less valuable because less generally read, makes it probable that the library of the university will require as large an expenditure as the average of those mentioned. With these views, we recommend, as an object second only in importance to a new building, the formation of a library fund, yielding an annual income of ten thousand dollars. Every thoughtful mind recognizes the library of a college as its chief instrument of instruction. It is the reservoir from which the teacher and the pupil of to-day are to draw the accumulations of the past, in every field of knowledge, and to which they, in their turn, are to add the fruits of their labors for the teacher and the pupil of the future. It is the intellectual capital which sets in motion and keeps alive the intellectual industry which is essential to the progress of our race. No department of science or learning can grow or live without it.

In the opinion of your committee, the library is now closed for too large a part of the year; and they commend this subject to your consideration, with the hope that the freest access which is consistent with its security and proper care will hereafter be permitted.

We believe that a greater interest will be felt by the

community in the welfare of the college, if we invite the counsel and co-operation of the benefactors of the proposed undertakings, so far as it will not interfere with the government of the university.

In order to carry out these views, your committee recommend, —

First, That the Corporation be requested to organize a permanent body for the control and management of the library, and the expenditure of its income, in accordance with the suggestions contained in this report.

Second, That an appeal be made to all friends of learning to contribute to the erection of a new building for the library, at an estimated cost of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The subscription shall be held by trustees chosen by the subscribers. The trustees, with the consent and approval of the Corporation, shall erect the building upon land set apart by the college, upon such trusts as shall be agreed upon by the Corporation and trustees. Provided, that a suitable portion of the building shall be devoted to a reading-room, to be kept open during the whole year, — Sundays, and public holidays, and days requisite for inspection and examination only excepted, — and properly lighted and warmed in winter, and accessible, under proper regulations, to all suitable persons ; and provided, that a proper portion of the building shall be set apart for engravings and other works of art, which now belong to or hereafter may become the property of the college.

Third, That an appeal be made to the friends of the college for a library fund of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, to be invested separately from other funds, and the whole income of which, without any charge for management, shall be used for the purchase of books, excepting only that in case of the loss of any part of such fund, a portion of the income shall be applied towards making good such loss.

Fourth, That the Corporation be requested to make regulations which shall render the library as accessible during the whole year as its security and proper care will permit, and with no other exceptions than those already stated.

WM. GRAY,  
NATHL. THAYER,  
SAML ELIOT,  
EDWARD E. HALE,  
BENJ. S. ROTCH.

BOSTON, Dec. 21, 1866.

On motion of Hon. J. W. Bacon, *Ordered*, That the special Committee on the library be requested to confer with the Corporation in relation to those matters suggested in their report, this day submitted, which require action on the part of the Corporation; and that said committee be instructed to take such farther action and to make such farther inquiries as may be necessary in their judgment to promote the usefulness of the library; and to report to this Board.

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IN BOARD OF OVERSEERS OF HARVARD COLLEGE,  
BOSTON, March 13, 1867.

THE REVEREND PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY read the following Report of the Standing Committee of the CORPORATION on the Library, which he was directed by the CORPORATION to present to the BOARD; and communicated the following votes of the CORPORATION, asking the assent of the OVERSEERS thereto; and in the adoption of which, the BOARD concurred:—

HARVARD COLLEGE, Feb. 23, 1867.

The Standing Committee on the Library, to whom were referred the report of the Special Committee of the Overseers, and the order introduced into that Board

by the Hon. J. W. Bacon, on the 17th ultimo, have had a conference with the Special Committee of the Overseers, and respectfully report, that in regard to the main topic, the appointment of a Council for the Library, they informed the Committee of the Overseers that the President and Fellows had already contemplated proposing the creation of such a Board. They also assured the committee of the gratification with which the Corporation received the proposal to raise a fund for the purchase of books, and for the increase of library accommodations; and of the readiness of the Corporation to accede to their views in regard to enlarging the facilities of access to the library, so far as appropriate funds would meet the expense of such increased facilities. The expenses of removing to a new building, re-arranging the books, altering the catalogue references, displaying the engravings, and providing for extra lights, fuel, and assistants, must not be forgotten.

On only one point your committee must express their decided dissent from the report offered to the Overseers. They cannot recommend that the council should have power to sell or exchange any books not duplicates. A donation to the library is a trust held by the Corporation, sacred to the use of its readers. Nor is it possible for us to say that any volume given is altogether useless. Books containing the latest and most important additions to literature and science are most valuable; next to these are books throwing the clearest light on the history of art, science, and civilization, or containing the clearest records of what has been accomplished. Such books alone are to be sought for the library: but, when other books are offered as gifts, it is proper to accept them; and, having been accepted, they must be preserved, and may by some future student be turned to some account.

Your committee recommend the adoption of the following votes:—

VOTED, That a council of the library be established, to which shall be committed the general control and oversight of the public library of the university. The council shall consist of the president and of six other persons, who shall be appointed by the Corporation, with the consent of the board of Overseers, for the term of three years. Any vacancy occurring in the council shall be filled by an appointment made in the same manner for the unexpired term.

VOTED, That it shall be the duty of the council to see that the laws and regulations of the library are enforced, and to propose from time to time to the Corporation such changes in them as may be for the interest of the university ; to direct the purchase of books to the extent of the funds appropriated for that purpose ; to appoint all persons employed in the library excepting the librarian, the assistant librarian, and the janitor, and to fix the rate of compensation to be paid to such persons from the funds provided for that purpose. It shall also be the duty of the council to visit and inspect the theological, law, and medical libraries.

WILLIAM GRAY, Esq., from the special committee appointed on the 17th of January, 1867, to confer with the CORPORATION, submitted the following report and vote:

The report was accepted, and the vote adopted :—

#### REPORT.

The special committee on the library, instructed to confer with the Corporation, respectfully report :—

That the communication this day made by the Corporation presents their action in the premises.

At the conference, the committee on behalf of that board, as well as that of this Board, were of opinion that the permanent body to whose charge the library should be intrusted should be composed of the president, three resident professors, and three members from the community at large. The nominations made adopt this classification, but it is not made a part of the statutes.

We regard this classification as of great importance, and respectfully recommend that it be preserved in acting upon future nominations.

WM. GRAY,  
N. THAYER,  
SAML. ELIOT,  
EDW. E. HALE,  
BENJ. S. ROTCH.

VOTED, That the report of the special committee on the library be communicated to the Corporation, as expressing the views of this Board.

THE REVEREND PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY presented the following vote, passed by the CORPORATION on the 23d of February, 1867: —

VOTED, That if the Overseers consent to the above votes [establishing the Council of the Library], the Rev. JAMES WALKER, D.D., Professor HENRY W. TORREY, SAMUEL ELIOT, Esq., FRANCIS E. PARKER, Esq., Professor WOLCOTT GIBBS, and Professor FRANCIS J. CHILD, be appointed members of the COUNCIL OF THE LIBRARY for the term of three years.

The vote was concurred in, under a unanimous suspension of the rule requiring that the same should be laid over to an adjourned meeting.

WILLIAM GRAY, Esq., on behalf of the Special Committee on the Library, submitted the following votes, which were unanimously passed: —

VOTED, That an attempt should be made to procure funds for a new library building.

VOTED, That the special committee on the library inquire and report to this Board on the following points: —

First. Whether the Corporation will consent to the disposal of Gore Hall for some other use than that of the library, and apply the money received therefor towards the erection of a new library building.

Second. Whether an additional amount can be raised by subscription, which, in addition to the sum realized from Gore Hall, will complete a new library building.

VOTED, That the special committee invite gentlemen from the community at large to act with them, and procure subscriptions in conformity with the plan recommended in their report made at the last meeting of this Board.

True copies of Record,

Attest:

NATHANIEL B. SHURTLEFF,  
*Secretary of the Overseers.*



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



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